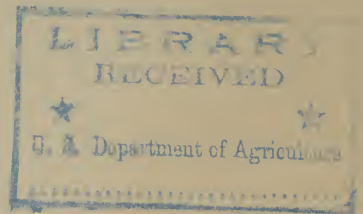


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## A CIRCULAR TO SEEDSMAN.

## United States Department of Agriculture,

WASHINGTON, D. C., DECEMBER 1887.

## NEW FORAGE PLANTS.

The introduction of new plants, known to be desirable for more general cultivation, is always slow. It is not the province of the Department to distribute seeds in greater quantity than is required for the purpose of experiment, but it desires to encourage the cultivation of such as have proved to be of value. For this purpose, attention is called to the following forage plants which have been sufficiently tested to warrant their general cultivation, or more extended trial, in the sections mentioned. None of them have been introduced to any extent into the market, and it is believed that their more general introduction will prove profitable, not only to the farmer, but also to those who provide a supply of seeds.

**Sprouting Millet.** (*Panicum proliferum*, var. *geniculatum*.) This has been called "Munro Grass" and "Sprouting Crab-grass," but Sprouting Millet would be a better name. It is an annual which is a native of the Southern States and has much the habit of Texas Millet, but is somewhat coarser, on rich damp soil frequently attaining a length of 6 or 7 feet. Most of the favorable reports regarding it are from the Gulf and South Atlantic States, but it has given excellent results in a limited trial on the Department grounds. It continues vigorous until killed by frost, and may be cut repeatedly during the season. The seed ripens late, and though small is quite abundant.

**Texas Blue Grass.** (*Poa arachnifera*.) Reports upon this grass have been uniformly favorable. It originated in Northern Texas, and considerably resembles Kentucky Blue Grass, but seems adapted to a more southern range, where its chief value is for winter pasture. A number of persons are offering the seed for sale in small quantities, but the seeds are so covered with webby hairs that they are difficult both to clean and sow, so that its introduction into cultivation has been slow. Like Bermuda Grass it is grown from sets as well as seeds. It thrives best on heavy soil.

**Alfilaria.** (*Erodium cicutarium*.) Also known as Storksbill, Pin-grass, Filaree, etc. A valuable forage plant for the dry regions from Colorado and New Mexico to Southern California, where it makes its growth during the moist winter season. It should not be sown in the eastern portion of the United States, as there are better forage plants for that section of the country, and as when introduced there it becomes a somewhat troublesome weed. For the great Southwest however it has much merit, and there is a large demand for its seed to be sown upon the ranges where the supply of grass has been diminished by stock. One stock-raiser applied to the Department to know where he could obtain a supply of seed to sow in places upon his ranch of 20,000 acres. Prof. S. M. Tracy, who has been investigating the forage plants of the arid regions of the Southwest the past season in the interest of the Department, reports that Alfilaria is highly prized wherever he has been, and that people have frequent requests for seed to be sent into new localities.

**Teosinte.** (*Eulæna luxurians*.) This remarkably luxuriant Central American forage plant is destined to be exceedingly popular throughout the Southern States as soon as seed can be obtained at a reasonable cost. It requires good soil and a fair amount of moisture, but where these exist its growth is enormous. It should not be planted until the season is well advanced, as it is sensitive to frost and grows very slowly in cool weather. The plant much resembles Indian Corn but suckers more, and the seeds in the husks are on slender spikes instead of ears. The seed has been ripened in a few localities near the Gulf, and efforts should be made to grow it in sufficient quantity for market.

**Indian Millet.** (*Oryzopsis cuspidata*.) This is a perennial bunch-grass from one to two feet high, or higher in moist situations. It is found throughout the Rocky Mountain region, where it thrives on soil too sandy for other valuable grasses. It is one of the most promising of the native grasses for cultivation in the arid parts of the country, but no efforts of importance have yet been made for its cultivation. The seeds are abundant, and as they do not readily shell out when ripe they can be easily gathered.

**American Canary Grass.** (*Phalaris intermedia*.) Also known as Reed Canary Grass, Stewart's Canary Grass, Gilbert's Relief Grass, and California Timothy. It is a native of the Southern and some of the Western States and is highly recommended, by the few who have tried it, as a winter and spring grass for the South, wherever a fair degree moisture exists. There is a variety called *angusta* which is more vigorous, but perhaps needs moister ground. The seed is not difficult to gather.

**Abyssinian Grass.** (*Eragrostis Abyssinica*.) A small quantity of imported seed of this grass was distributed last season by the Department, and the reports thus far received regarding it have been quite favorable. It is an annual, and produces a fair crop of hay of excellent quality. It is mainly intended for a hay grass in localities which suffer somewhat from drought. Seed has been ripened on the crop grown from Department seed the present season.

**Bermuda Grass.** (*Cynodon dactylon*.) The little seed which has been seed sold in this country of this well known southern grass has all been imported, and has been so high in price, and often so poor in quality, that people have bought it sparingly. Its artificial propagation has been mostly by slow method of planting the sets or fragments of the rooting stems. The grass has, however, been found to seed fairly well in some localities, and an effort should be made to introduce home grown seed into the market.

Very respectfully,

NORMAN J. COLMAN,

Commissioner of Agriculture.

